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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 009393

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR D, P, C, S/ES, SA, DRL, NEA/SA/EX and HR/RMA

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: URGENT REQUEST FOR RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW DELHI
POLITICAL SECTION DRI POSITIONSAS US-INDIA TIES SKYROCKET

REF: New Delhi 6281

1. This is an ACTION REQUEST for NEA/SA/EX and HR/RMA.
Please see paragraph 6.

2. Summary: Embassy New Delhi respectfully requests that the DRI position (10504002 vice Nair) in our Political Section be immediately re-established and filled for 2006-2008. Our workload has skyrocketed as US-India relations become increasingly strategic on the eve of the President's visit in Spring 2006. At the same time we stand to lose three DRI positions in the Political Section by summer 2006. If we are to serve Washington policy-makers well, we will need Washington to fill all three DRI slots in Political. The Nair position is the most critical of the three. Please read our full justification below. End Summary.

3. Since the President announced a new strategic partnership with India on July 18, 2005, the already intense workload of Embassy New Delhi's Political Section has soared. Officers are working to implement the President's Civilian Nuclear Energy agreement with India; intensify Indian coordination with the US on relations with Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh and on terrorism, and democratization; forge more productive relationships with previously-closed ministries dealing with defense and internal and external security; track a complicated domestic political situation that impacts directly on US foreign policy priorities on Iran and Iraq; play a positive role in seeking a peaceful resolution in Kashmir; advance the cause of human rights, religious freedom, and labor protection; and manage an intense schedule of visits by senior Department officials, Congressional leadership, Cabinet members, and (in Spring 2006), the President.

4. At the same time, despite the belief by senior Washington officials that this is a mistake, the Political Section is shrinking; one DRI slot (position 10505112 vice Holt-Hansen) dedicated to labor reporting has been vacant since April 2005, and HR has informed Post that it will not be filled. Another DRI position (number 01982000 vice Drazek) dedicated to external reporting (and the USG's sole political reporting officer on all political matters related to this Embassy's coverage of Bhutanese internal developments such as the King's proposed constitutional reform as well as Bhutan's external relations, to include refugee problems between Bhutan and Nepal, as well as all India human rights and religious freedom reporting) is scheduled to disappear in September 2006. The third DRI position (10504002 vice Nair) will, according to HR, be lost in April, making it the most critical of the three. Once these positions go, our workload will be untenable.

5. The incumbent in the Nair position has worked on aligning US and Indian foreign policy objectives on Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Iraq, Israel, Syria, and Iran. He has also been in the forefront of efforts to get India to support US democratization goals around the world, including through the UN Democracy Fund. This officer is our principal operational outreach officer to the Ministry of External Affairs, and the foundation of our external political reporting unit. Tibet outreach is another major component of the position, as is UN reform, to include management of India's high expectation of a permanent Security Council seat. The incumbent has managed visits by visiting senior Washington officials including Ambassador Shirin Tahir Kheli, as well as high-priority CODELS such as the November 2005 high-profile visit of Representative Dan Burton and his delegation. This officer is our utility-infielder and all-rounder on India's external foreign relations at a time of unprecedented interest coming from Washington. To lose this job would cripple our section and do Washington policy-makers a large dis-service.

6. ACTION REQUEST FOR HR/RMA AND NEA/SA/EX: Post respectfully requests re-establishment of Position 10504002 Vice Nair immediately, and the re-establishment of positions 10505112 vice Holt-Hansen and 01982000 vice Drazek for Fall, 2006. Filling position 10505112 vice Holt-Hansen will enable us to focus more on child and bonded labor, efforts by socialist labor unions to infiltrate the IT sector, and

related efforts to prevent the most horrific forms of child labor. Allowing Post to keep position 10505112 vice Drazek will ensure that the USG's sole political reporting officer on Bhutan will continue to provide timely analysis on the King's efforts to forge a constitutional monarchy, manage his relations with China and India, and come to an agreement with Nepal on refugees. It will also allow post to continue to devote full attention to developing a meaningful human rights dialogue with the GOI on hot-button issues such as untouchability, child labor, and religious freedom.

17. Post thanks Department for its consideration of its petition.

MULFORD